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O 230747Z APR 08 ZDS ALL POST NUM SVC REQUESTING
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2814
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 1932
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 1937
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2059
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0622
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1336
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1693
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2115
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4546
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1194
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC//DHO-7//
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK//DOOC/ECMO/CC/DAO/DOB/DOI//
RUZEHAA/CDR USEUCOM INTEL VAIHINGEN GE//ECJ23-CH/ECJ5M//

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 HARARE 000359

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN
DCHA/AA FOR MIKE HESS
AFR/AA FOR KATE ALMQVIST AND FRANKLIN MOORE
AFR/SA FOR ERIC LOKEN, LORIE DOBBINS, JENNIFER KOLE
OFDA FOR KY LUU, ANNE CONVERY, AND TRESJA DENYSENKO
PRETORIA FOR JWESSEL, OFDA
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/23/2018

TAGS: PHUM KDEM PGOV PREL ASEC ZI

SUBJECT: STATE-SPONSORED VIOLENCE CONTINUES; VICTIMS
DISPLACED

REF: A. HARARE 00331
1B. HARARE 00343

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Classified By: AMBASSADOR JAMES D. MCGEE FOR REASONS 1.4 (B & D)

SUMMARY

11. (U) Gangs of war veterans and ZANU-PF youth continue a state-sponsored terror campaign in rural areas burning homes, beating opposition supporters in public, and forcing attendance at ZANU-PF rallies. ZANU-PF thugs, and some security forces, are also victimizing and intimidating urban opposition supporters. Over 450 victims have required treatment or have been prevented from doing so.

12. (U) Some victims describe being abducted from their homes and beaten at ZANU-PF torture camps. Hundreds of opposition supporters have fled their homes out of fear. Opposition and human rights groups report shortages of critical supplies and resources necessary to assist the growing population of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Post is working closely with other international donors and our partners to assist.
END SUMMARY.

A Tidal Wave of Casualties

13. (SBU) MDC-Tsvangirai Secretary General Tendai Biti told reporters at an April 20 press conference in South Africa that 10 MDC activists had been killed and more than 500 victimized by ZANU-PF supporters and uniformed security forces since the March 29 elections. Those targeted include opposition members, polling agents, and party office bearers. We have been able to confirm only one death to date (Reftel A.).

14. (C) The Counseling Services Unit (CSU), a local NGO that provides medical and social services to victims of state-violence, has treated 456 victims since the March 29 elections -- including over 100 cases that required hospitalization and surgical procedures. Dr. Frances Lovemore, director at CSU, told us on April 22 that CSU doctors were having trouble keeping up with the "tidal wave of casualties" coming in for medical treatment. Moreover,

Dr. Lovemore was concerned with two disturbing incidents in the past few days. First, an ambulance CSU dispatched to pick up a victim in Kotwa district in Mashonaland East province was chased away by ZANU-PF supporters and followed back to Harare by an unmarked truck, typically used by suspected state intelligence officers. We also have received additional reports of ZANU-PF supporters preventing victims from seeking medical attention. Second, for unknown purposes, a central intelligence officer (CIO) attempted to gain access to victims hospitalized at a local Harare hospital.

Embassy Collects Harrowing Stories

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15. (SBU) In addition to the flood of reports from opposition and local human rights groups, Post has collected other accounts of violence firsthand. On April 19 and 20, EmbOffs from USAID visited Mutare urban, Nyanga, and Chipinge districts in Manicaland province to conduct interviews with local opposition officials and victims and to assess the level of need for humanitarian assistance. (NOTE: The vast majority of post-election violence has taken place in Manicaland, Masvingo, and Mashonaland East and West provinces -- former ZANU-PF strongholds where the opposition made significant gains in these elections. END NOTE.) EmbOffs obtained photos of IDPs and victims of beatings and torture, as well as of victim's homes which were burned by gangs of war vets and ZANU-PF youths.

16. (SBU) In Mutare, the embassy team came across 157 IDPs at the local MDC-Tsvangirai party offices. At the time of the visit, there were 106 children under the age of 12 and 113 adults (many of them elderly) camped in the open on the office grounds -- sharing one toilet and minimal available water. The group was in need of food, cooking oil, tents, portable toilets, and money for transportation. The IDPs were all farm workers and their families from the nearby Muniya farm. According to the victims, Muniya Panganai, a war vet who seized the farm in 2006, began evictions on April 15 as punishment because the area had overwhelmingly voted for the MDC. The acting Officer in Charge of the Mutare police (Mr. Goronga - first name not known) supervised the evictions at gunpoint.

17. (C) At the MDC Offices the team also spoke with the MDC District Security Officer for Nyanga, Ismael Nyandowe, who on April 17 had been beaten with iron bars by 30 ZANU-PF youth. Nyandowe suffered a fractured left foot and head wounds. Among the assailants were two army soldiers, although Nyandowe said the majority of the group was made up of war vets and ZANU-PF youth. Outgoing ZANU-PF MP Paul Kadzinga was said to be coordinating the violence in the area. Nyandowe also reported that war vets had established at least five camps in the Nyanga district for training ZANU-PF youth and where beatings and torture of MDC supporters take place. At least 15 MDC activists had reported being abducted and beaten at camps in the area since April 15.

18. (C) In Nyanga, EmbOffs spoke with Methodist ministers who told us there was a high level of violence and intimidation in the area. At one point during our discussion, a ZANU-PF vehicle passed by and the ministers expressed fear for their own safety and quickly left. A bishop at the Holy Cross Catholic church also confirmed stories of violence. EmbOffs received reports from representatives of Zimbabwe Community Development Trust, a local NGO operating in the area, that war vets had lists of local election observers and opposition party polling agents in Nyanga who were targeted for violence.

19. (C) In Chipinge, EmbOffs met with civil society representatives from the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) and local MDC-Tsvangirai officials. Both groups confirmed that many people were being victimized in the rural areas. One MDC activist in Chipinge said he had been attacked on April 15 by six ZANU-PF youth and severely beaten. His attackers kept asking if he had "changed" ("chinga" in Shona means change and was part of the MDC-Tsvangirai campaign slogan). There were also reports that war vets and ZANU-PF youth were setting up roadblocks to

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prevent maize from arriving in Chipinge, and that no one could obtain maize from the local Grain Marketing Board (GMB), the state-monopoly on grain distribution, unless they had a "letter from the war veterans."

¶10. (C) Embassy local employees have received reports from family members in rural areas that village headmen are forcing the public to attend daily ZANU-PF rallies. Anyone who fails to attend a rally is visited during the night by war vets and ZANU-PF youth and beaten.

Soldiers, Police Dole Out Beatings In Urban Areas

¶11. (C) In addition to widespread attacks in rural areas, violence and intimidation involving military and police officers is taking place in urban areas as well. For example, on April 17, a member of the Embassy's local security staff was driving through Chitungwiza, a high-density suburb and opposition stronghold outside Harare, and witnessed five uniformed soldiers with AK-47 rifles assaulting two pedestrians. The soldiers instructed the two pedestrians to lie on the ground and then severely beat them with truck fan belts. Another 20 soldiers -- all carrying AK-47s and fan belts -- were seen moving in groups of two throughout other parts of the area that same morning. Numerous photos received from opposition and human rights groups have shown victims with severe lash marks on their backs and buttocks.

¶12. (C) Also in Chitungwiza, on April 20 at approximately 3:00 am, a group of 12 uniformed men entered the home of Evelyn Jaka, a PSI nurse counselor (PSI is a USAID HIV/AIDS program partner). The assailants forced Jaka and her family outside the house where they were blindfolded and made to lie on the ground. Jaka's 15-year-old son was assaulted and then taken away; he was returned an hour later shaken but not injured. The assailants also took Jaka's husband. He was released at 8:00 am the same day from a nearby police station and admitted to a local hospital for injuries resulting from being severely beaten with iron bars while in custody.

State Says Prove It

¶13. (U) In response to the loud outcry from the opposition, human rights groups, and some foreign governments (including the United States and the United Kingdom), the April 22 headline of the government-run newspaper The Herald demanded "Prove violence claims -- Govt." Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa, rumored to be one of the senior ZANU-PF officials orchestrating the terror campaign, was quoted as saying that it was possible that the MDC-Tsvangirai party "was behind the cases of political violence as a part of a propaganda campaign to justify international intervention in the country."

COMMENT

¶14. (C) Post is working with the European Commission, the British, and other like-minded international donors to compile joint findings on post-election violence and the

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potential humanitarian crisis which could be passed to SADC and Africa Union leaders to make the case for their greater involvement in resolving the Zimbabwe crisis. SADC has focused, as at the Lusaka Summit, on the delay in announcing election results, and has not addressed the continuing and growing violence. Additionally, we have asked our local human rights and humanitarian assistance partners to deploy resources to volatile rural and urban areas to assist victims and IDPs (Reftel B.).

¶15. (C) While there have been some reports of violence perpetrated by the military and police, we believe that ZANU-PF youth and war vets are mainly responsible and that this violence is orchestrated by ZANU-PF party structures. There are isolated reports that police have arrested ZANU-PF members alleged to have committed criminal violence against MDC supporters. More common, as reported by our Embassy team, is inaction by the police in failing to investigate reports and arrest suspects; for the most part police have not been involved in violence.

¶16. (C) Despite the disturbing reign of terror in rural areas and some townships, Harare remains calm and the Embassy continues to conduct business as usual. END COMMENT.

DHANANI